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Food and Home Notes

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE · WASHINGTON, D.C. 20250

35TH YEAR

JUNE 19, 1978

FOOD COUPONS IN THE MARKETPLACE

Coupon clipping is big business. The face value of price discounting coupons issued last year exceeded \$500 million--and will be higher this year. Nearly four out of every five families in the United States use coupons, according to a report by the U.S. Department of Agriculture.

Coupons are used mostly with processed foods, household products, and health and beauty products, with little use in other segments of the retailing industry. Perishable foods are usually discounted through advertised specials.

About 55 percent of the total number of coupons issued appear in newspapers. Magazines account for another 15 percent while Sunday supplements carry 17 percent. Although in-pack coupons represent only 8 percent of the total, and direct mail coupons another 4 percent, their combined use constitutes the highest number of coupons redeemed.

About 80 percent of all food shoppers surveyed by the U.S. Department of Agriculture in early 1977 used food coupons--up about four percent from the previous year.

The impact of coupons on retail food prices--even through "double couponing"**--appears to be minimal. Actually, coupon redemption is very much like a regular sale, except that the buyer must present the coupon. Manufacturers and retailers



consider coupons a form of advertising. However, without coupons, no one really knows if food prices would be lower or if the advertising outlay would be directed to other promotional campaigns. The total value of coupons last year accounted for only 42 cents out of every \$100 of food store sales opposed to \$3 out of every \$100 going to food advertising.

* "Double couponing" refers to a double discount allowed by certain retail stores and at certain times. Evidence indicates that the retailer absorbs the difference between the manufacturer's coupon and the "double" discount.

CONSUMPTION DECLINES

- * Per capita food consumption during 1977 remained high but was slightly below the record level of 1976.
- * The food consumption index for all foods was the second highest on record--1 percent below 1976.
- * Poultry consumption was up 2 percent from 1976.
- * Per capita consumption of red meats and fish declined less than 1 percent from a year ago.
- * Dairy products showed a small change and egg usage was down by 1 percent.

Red meat consumption: 3 percent decline in beef; 4 percent increase in pork.

Dairy consumption: Fluid whole milk down 4 percent; Lowfat milk up 6 percent; Ice cream sharply down; Cheese--small increase.

Coffee consumption: Down 25 percent.

Sugar and sweetener: Up 2 percent.

THE COFFEE SITUATION

The world's consumers aren't drinking as much coffee as they used to, which is one reason the coffee supplies are up, say U.S. Department of Agriculture economists.

With the decline in world coffee consumption since April 1977, green coffee prices have dropped sharply.

The current coffee supply outlook is favorable and is expected to remain so through 1978. However, there is always the threat of a damaging frost in Brazil which could affect 1979 production, and, of course, cause fluctuations in coffee prices.

A gradual decline is projected in U.S. average retail coffee prices from the high of \$3.43 in February, 1978 to around \$2 to \$2.50 by December. As for instant coffee, the 1-ounce jar which sells for approximately \$3.37 nationally may fall to \$3 by the end of the year, with an "outside chance" that it might go below that level, say the economists.

FREE PUBLICATIONS

While supply lasts, free, single copies of the following booklets are available from the Publications Office, GPA, U.S. Department of Agriculture, Washington, D.C. 20250.

- "Growing Bonsai," Home and Garden Bulletin #206
- "Growing Chrysanthemums," Home and Garden Bulletin #65
- "Growing Flowering Perennials," Home and Garden Bulletin #114
- "Growing Gardenias," Home and Garden Bulletin #152
- "Growing Ground Covers," Home and Garden Bulletin #175
- "Growing Ornamentals in Urban Gardens," Home and Garden Bulletin #188
- "Spring Flowering Bulbs," Home and Garden Bulletin #136
- "Selecting Shrubs for Shady Areas," Home and Garden Bulletin #142
- "Selecting and Growing Shade Trees," Home and Garden Bulletin #205
- "How to Buy Lawn Seed," Home and Garden Bulletin #169

COST OF FOOD AT HOME FOR A WEEK (APRIL 1978)

	<u>Thrifty plan</u>	<u>Low-cost plan</u>	<u>Moderate-cost plan</u>	<u>Liberal plan</u>
FAMILIES				
Young couple.....	\$25.30	\$33.00	\$41.50	\$49.50
Elderly couple.....	22.70	29.50	36.50	43.60
Family of 4 with preschool children.....	35.60	45.80	57.30	68.40
Family of 4 with elementary school children.....	42.80	55.20	69.40	82.90
INDIVIDUALS*				
Women				
20-54 years.....	10.40	13.50	16.80	20.00
55 years and over.....	9.40	12.20	15.00	17.80
Men				
20-54 years.....	12.60	16.50	20.90	25.00
55 years and over.....	11.20	14.60	18.20	21.80
Children				
1-2 years.....	5.70	7.20	8.90	10.60
3-5 years.....	6.90	8.60	10.70	12.80
6-8 years.....	8.80	11.20	14.10	16.80
9-11 years.....	11.00	14.00	17.60	21.10
Girls 12-19 years.....	10.50	13.40	16.60	19.80
Boys 12-14 years.....	11.70	14.90	18.70	22.30
15-19 years.....	12.90	16.50	20.70	24.80

* Cost of food at home for any family can be figured by totaling costs shown for individuals of sex and age of various members of the family as follows:

- o For those eating all meals at home (or carrying some meals from home), use amounts shown.
- o For those eating some meals out, deduct 5 percent from amount in table for each meal not eaten at home. Thus, for a person eating lunch out 5 days a week, subtract 25 percent or one-fourth the cost shown.
- o For guests, include for each meal eaten, 5 percent of amount shown in table for the proper age group.

Next, adjust the total figure if more or fewer than four people generally eat at the family table. Costs shown for individuals in 4-person families.

Adjustment is necessary because larger families tend to buy and use foods more economically than smaller ones. Thus, for a 1-person family, add 20 percent; 2 persons, add 10 percent; 3, add 5 percent; 4, use as is; 5 or 6, subtract 5 percent; 7 or more, subtract 10 percent.

Note: The publication "Family Food Budgeting for Good Meals and Good Nutrition," Home and Garden Bulletin No. 94, describes USDA's thrifty food plan (used in setting the coupon allotment in the Food Stamp Program) and the three more costly plans, on which these costs are based. Single copies are available from the Office of Governmental and Public Affairs, U.S. Department of Agriculture, Washington, D.C. 20250. Request publication by name and number and include your ZIP code.

FOOD CLIPS

When a meat or poultry product bears the mark of federal inspection by the U.S. Department of Agriculture it must meet certain standards as set for content, preparation and labeling. In baby food, a product marked "meat and broth" must contain at least 61 percent meat.

* * *

The label "turkey ham" refers to a product made from turkey thighs only and cured.

* * *

Poultry pies--chicken or turkey--must contain at least 14 percent poultry meat according to regulations by USDA.

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USDA regulations require that vegetable and meat casserole have at least 25 percent meat.

* * *

Oleomargarine or margarine contains pasteurized cream, cow's milk, skim milk, combination of nonfat dry milk and water or finely ground soybeans and water. The finished product must contain at least 80 percent fat according to USDA regulations, and the label must indicate what fats are used.

* * *

A product called "Brunswick stew" must contain at least 25 percent of two kinds of meat and/or poultry--and corn must be one of the vegetables.

CHILD NUTRITION

-- IN PUERTO RICO

Students in Puerto Rico's 1,540 public schools ate nearly 77 million pounds of food valued at \$35.4 million, during their 1974-75 school year, according to a USDA study on the island's school lunch and school breakfast programs.

Altogether, an average of 94,641 students sat down to breakfast each morning in Puerto Rican schools, and 417,000 students joined each other for lunch.

The meals are made available through child nutrition programs administered by the USDA.

ABOUT YOU 'N' ME

Formerly with the Better Way Department at Good Housekeeping magazine, Joan Lippert is now managing editor for Science Digest...Anne Hagerty of the Springfield (Mass.) Daily News as new editor of their "Close Up" section will cover food, and consumer information in depth now.....Two more Food Writers conferences lined up for fall--Nov. 9 for the Dairy Council of the Upper Chesapeake (Md. and Del. Bay Area) and the Dairy Council of Greater Metropolitan Washington (D.C.) for Nov. 16. Press information on the Conference on Nutrition and the American Food System is available from the Community Nutrition Institute, 1146 19th St. NW, Washington, D.C. 20036. Contact J. Rogers.